

CONSTITUTION

of the

BAPTIST CONVENTION  
OF  
NEW YORK

November 2005

Note: All Constitutional changes approved by the Annual Meetings of November 1999, November 2000, November 2001, November 2003, November 2005, September 2006, September 2009 were included in this Constitution.

# Constitution of the Baptist Convention of New York

## Article I: Name

This body shall be called the Baptist Convention of New York, hereinafter referred to as the "Convention."

## Article II: Statement of Faith

We adopt as our statement of faith *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted on May 9, 1963 and amended on June 9, 1998 and amended on June 14, 2000 by the Southern Baptist Convention.

## Article III: Membership

The Convention shall consist of messengers elected and certified by churches and church-type missions cooperating with and contributing to the causes of the Southern Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program.

**Section 1.** Each church shall be entitled to three (3) messengers for the first fifty (50) or less members, and one (1) additional messenger for each additional fifty (50) members, provided no church shall have more than ten (10) messengers.

**Section 2.** The churches and church-type missions represented by messengers shall be in friendly cooperation with the Convention, sympathetic with its purpose, work, and with the Statement of Faith in Article II. Among churches not in cooperation with the Convention are churches which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior.

**Section 3.** The messengers shall be elected and certified by the churches to the Convention. The Convention office shall provide special registration forms for the churches at least sixty (60) days prior to the annual Convention meeting.

**Section 4.** A church-type mission sponsored by one of the churches of the Convention shall be entitled to one (1) messenger in addition to the messengers of the sponsoring church.

## Article IV: Purpose

**Section 1.** This Convention is purely a cooperative body and its purpose shall be to furnish a means by which its cooperating churches, in their sovereign capacity, can work together in promoting all enterprises which they collectively deem necessary in carrying out Christ's Great Commission.

**Section 2.** The Convention shall have no ecclesiastical authority whatever over its cooperating churches.

**Section 3.** This Convention and its Executive Board shall work in harmonious relationship with the existing state Conventions and all entities of the Southern Baptist Convention.

## Article V: Meetings

This Convention shall meet annually at such time and place as it may determine. Special meetings may be called, or the time and place of the annual meeting may be changed by a vote of two-thirds of Executive Board members present and voting, should an emergency justify such action.

## **Article VI: Officers**

**Section 1.** The officers of this Convention shall be: a president, first vice-president, second vice-president, recording secretary, and assistant recording secretary.

**Section 2.** These officers shall be elected annually by the Convention and shall be duly installed at the closing session of the Convention's annual meeting and shall hold their respective offices until their successors are elected and installed.

**Section 3.** No president shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

**Section 4.** The Convention shall employ an Executive Director/Treasurer, and other salaried personnel, as needed according to current employment policies.

## **Article VII: Executive Board**

**Section 1.** At each annual session the Convention shall elect members of an Executive Board.

**Section 2.** It shall be comprised of:

- a. The elected officers of the Convention and the Executive Director as ex-officio members of the Executive Board;
- b. Each church and association is autonomous. So that the Executive Board may be a widely representative body, three (3) members from each association having 1,000 or less resident members and one additional member for each additional 1,000 resident members; and
- c. No more than fifteen (15) members from any district associational area, exclusive of any of the elected officers of the Convention and ex-officio members. The membership of the Executive Board from any association shall fairly represent the makeup of that association.

**Section 3.** The term of office for members of the Board shall be three (3) years. After serving one (1) full term of three (3) years, or the remainder of another member's three (3) year term, a member may be eligible for one (1) more three (3) year term. After that, a full year must elapse before the individual is eligible for re-election.

**Section 4.** All members of the Executive Board shall meet the qualifications for membership set forth in Article III, Membership. Any member of the Executive Board who does not meet this requirement at the time of the annual meeting of the Convention shall be disqualified from service on the Executive Board.

**Section 5.** No person or his or her spouse, other than ex-officio members, who receives regular remuneration directly or indirectly from this Convention shall be eligible for membership on the executive board. Pastors who receive salary supplements shall not be disqualified from service by this section.

**Section 6.** The Executive Board shall act on behalf of the Convention between sessions and shall make reports of its work at the annual meeting.

## **Article VIII: Boards, Trustees and Committees**

This Convention shall have power to appoint such boards, trustees and committees as shall be deemed necessary for the handling of the affairs of the Convention. The Executive Director/Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of each such body.

## **Article IX: Funds**

**Section 1.** All funds accepted by the Convention for any special object shall be applied according to the designation of the donors.

**Section 2.** All undesignated funds sent to the Treasurer of the Convention shall be distributed between this Convention's and the Southern Baptist Convention's causes according to percentage agreements adopted by this Convention.

**Section 3.** The overall financial policy of any institution or agency of the Convention shall require the approval of the Executive Board or the Convention. Such institutions or agencies shall finance their programs without governmental funds except for reasonable compensation for actual services by the institution or agency involved.

**Section 4.** Any special campaign for funds must be specifically approved by vote of the Convention or Executive Board.

## **Article X: Amendment**

All proposed amendments shall be presented to the Convention in writing at an annual meeting with action being postponed until the next annual meeting, at which time action must be taken no later than the second day with a two-thirds vote of messengers present and voting required for ratification.

## **By-laws**

The work of the Convention shall be governed by the following By-laws.

### **Article I: Meetings**

**Section 1.** The sessions of the Convention shall be opened and closed with prayer.

**Section 2.** Persons who are not messengers, but are invited to attend the Convention shall have the privilege to speak in debate with the permission of the moderator. Such persons shall not be permitted to vote.

**Section 3.** No member shall speak more than twice in any single debate on the same day without permission from the body.

**Section 4.** The rules of order for the sessions of the Convention shall be those laid down in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, but in cases where the meaning may not be clear, the president shall exercise his discretion, subject to the appeal of the Convention.

**Section 5.** All resolutions presented to the Convention shall be in writing and shall be referred to the Committee on Resolutions. Effective with the annual meeting of 2004, all resolutions must be submitted in writing at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting of the Convention.

### **Article II: Officers**

**Section 1.** Election of officers.

- a. The officers of the Convention shall be nominated from the floor and the election shall be by secret

ballot when two (2) or more persons are nominated for the same office.

**b.** The president shall be elected before vice-presidents are nominated, and the first vice-president is to be elected before receiving nominations for the second vice-president.

**c.** When three (3) or more persons are nominated and no person receives a majority of the votes cast, a second ballot will be taken to decide between the two (2) candidates receiving the most votes on the first ballot.

**Section 2.** The duties of these officers shall be those required in this Constitution and the By-laws.

### **Article III: Executive Board**

**Section 1.** Executive Board responsibilities:

**a.** The Executive Board shall serve the Convention when the Convention is not in session and will report to the Convention annually.

**b.** The Executive Board shall seek:

**i.** To assist in the growth and ministry of the churches;

**ii.** To strengthen the associations;

**iii.** To promote evangelism;

**iv.** To promote the establishment of new missions and churches, and help them minister to the world and within the geographical region of the Convention; and,

**v.** To secure an Executive Director/Treasurer and other personnel in accordance with terms and job descriptions previously adopted in keeping with its needs and resources.

**Section 2.** Executive Board meetings.

**a.** The Executive Board shall meet at least twice a year and at any other time it deems necessary to do its work. Such sessions shall be open meetings unless declared by the Executive Board to be a closed meeting.

**b.** For a regular meeting, one fourth of its membership shall be a quorum; and for a special called meeting, one third of its membership shall be a quorum.

**Section 3.** The Executive Board shall elect a chairman and a vice-chairman. The Board will divide itself into such subcommittees as are necessary, one of these being an Administrative Committee. The chairman and vice-chairman of the Executive Board shall be elected at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Executive Board previous to the annual meeting of the Convention. The chairman's term of service shall begin immediately following the Convention's annual meeting. The recording secretary of the Convention shall serve as the recording secretary of the Executive Board. Committees of the Executive Board shall be appointed by the chairman of the Executive Board after consultation with the president of the Convention and the Executive Director/Treasurer. No chairman shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

**Section 4.** The Administrative Committee shall consist of the Executive Director/Treasurer, the president of the Convention, the chairman, vice-chairman, and recording secretary of the Executive Board, the retiring chairman of the Executive Board (or a previous term member of the Administrative Committee, if the retiring chairman's

Executive Board term has expired), and the chairmen of the standing committees of the Board.

**Section 5.** Members shall attend meetings of the Executive Board unless providentially hindered and in such cases notification shall be given to the Board. Two (2) such consecutive absences without notification will be recognized as a resignation.

**Section 6.** If vacancies occur on the Executive Board or among officers between meetings of the Convention, the Board shall be empowered to fill the vacancies until the next Convention meeting.

**Section 7.** The Executive Board shall not incur any indebtedness for any period in excess of five (5) years without the approval of the Convention at its next scheduled meeting or a special meeting authorized under Article V of the Convention's Constitution.

**Section 8.** Finances.

**a.** The Executive Board shall present a proposed budget each year at the annual meeting for the purpose of financing the program projected for the next calendar year.

**i.** The Basic Budget will be the operating budget of the Convention. It will include all personnel and program expense for the succeeding year. The Income section of this budget will include actual expected revenues from all sources for the next year. The Cooperative Program income projected in the recommended budget will not exceed the income for the current year. This Cooperative Program income projection will be based on the Cooperative Program income for the twelve (12) months prior to budget preparation.

**ii.** The Advance Budget will be adopted with the Basic Budget. This budget will be the Cooperative Program goal beyond the Basic Budget's allocation for the Cooperative Program. It will be based on a realistic percentage increase over the previous year's Cooperative Program income. The advance Budget will be divided into a percentage basis. None of these funds will be used for personnel or program operation in the ongoing work. The Advance Budget will be used for special projects or objects of unusual interest to the Convention.

**iii.** The Total Budget will be the sum of the Basic and Advance Budgets and will be the budget goal for the year.

**b.** All financial obligations as budgeted are to be paid by the treasurer for the Convention out of available funds. An annual audit shall be made.

**c.** Cooperating Baptist churches in the geographical area of the Convention shall be asked to support the budget by giving a regular percentage of their unassigned offerings through the Cooperative Program and an offering designated during the Week of Prayer for BCNY Missions.

**d.** Any expenditures in excess of the budget amount in one given year must be first approved by the Executive Board.

**e.** Restricted funds, those funds received for specific purposes and restricted by the party providing financial resources to be managed by the Convention, including restricted funds carried over into another year, are to be used in the year in which they are provided or in the year immediately following the year in which they are provided. If not used for their intended purposes, their funds will be returned to the party providing them, or redirected on written approval from the donor.

**i.** The Executive Board will receive a written report in each September meeting on the activity planned or completed in each of these funds.

- ii. Each donor will receive at year-end a report of the activity during that year in the restricted funds which he or she provided.

## Article IV: Committees

**Section 1.** In advance of the annual session, the president shall appoint the following committees:

- a. A Committee on Credentials and Enrollment whose duties it shall be to provide registration materials for messengers and visitors. This committee shall make a report to the assembled messengers upon the call of the president and shall pass on the credentials of all messengers.
- b. A Committee on Committees whose duty it shall be to nominate for election by the Convention the committees listed in Section 2 of this article and such other committees as may be assigned to it.
- c. An Annual Sermon Committee to report to the Convention for approval the name of a preacher of the next annual sermon and an alternate preacher..

**Section 2.** The Convention shall elect the following committees to report to the next regular session of the Convention:

- a. The members of each of the following committees shall serve for three (3) years. After serving one (1) full term of three (3) years, a full term must elapse before an individual is eligible for re-election.

- i. A Committee on Order of Business. The chief function of this committee shall be: (a) to plan and recommend the Order of Business for the annual session of the Convention, (b) to report to the Convention for its approval the dates and meeting places for future annual Conventions for not more than 5 years in advance.

- ii. A Committee on Resolutions. This committee will receive, study, and present such resolutions to the annual session of the Convention as may be consistent with the purpose of this Convention.

- b. A Committee on Board Member's Nominations. This committee will nominate the members of the Executive Board and trustees and directors of the institutions and agencies of the Convention, keeping in mind the diversity within our Convention. This Committee shall consist of one (1) member from each area association and will be elected annually.

## Article V: Amendment

The By-laws may be altered by a two-thirds vote of the messengers present on the first or second day of the annual session of the Convention.